



How to be an effective speaker



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful





Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu,

We pray that this message reaches you
in good health and imaan.

On behalf of our AMAU Academy team, we would like
to present to you these compiled notes that we have
prepared to make your journey with us a lot easier.

Our notes are compiled by the AMAU Admin team
and have not been comprehensively checked
by a teacher.

If you find any errors or corrections that need
to be made, kindly inform us via our email
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May Allah make our paths toward seeking
beneficial knowledge easy and kindle our hearts
with sincerity and gratefulness
towards Him.

Jazakumullahu Khayran



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جل جلاله | Jalla Jalāluhu
Allah the Most Exalted



صلى الله عليه وسلم | Sallāllāhu Alayhi Wa Sallam
Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him

Preparation

Chapter One

Allah ﷻ said in the Qur'an: factors when it comes to public speaking; preparation is all about knowledge. Allah ﷻ said in the Quran:

- 1 **وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا**
And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those you will be questioned.

Surah Al-Isra' 36

Moreover, knowledge comes before action as Allah ﷻ said in the Quran:

- 2 **فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ**
So know, [O Muḥammad], that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh and ask forgiveness for your Sins.

Surah Muhammad 19

These verses indicate that the one who speaks must speak with knowledge and have an understanding of the subject they are talking about. This is done through preparing, researching, and asking people of knowledge. Doing so will enable the speaker to captivate the audience and sound more authentic.

One of the ways to do this is by first having a clear idea of what you want to communicate to the audience. Allah ﷻ said in the Quran:

- 3 **وَتَى الْحِكْمَةُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ**
He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good. And none will remember except those of understanding.

Surah Al-Baqarah 269

Ask yourself the following questions:

- **What is your key topic?**
- **What are you trying to achieve?**
- **Are there ways to break down your presentation?**

Another thing to keep in mind is that you should keep your content rich and that is done by using solid supporting evidence. This includes the Quran and the Sunnah, quotes, and statistics just to mention a few. Avoid narrating personal ideas and thoughts as evidence.

Finally, you should think about how to format your notes. Whether physical or electronic, the notes should be easy to read and utilize without being cumbersome. You should also think about what you want to read verbatim and what you wish to improvise on.

Nervousness and Staying Balanced

Chapter Two

It is very important to let your true personality come out when speaking. Avoid being robotic and try to be authentic within the boundaries of wisdom.

Allah ﷻ said in the Quran:

1 **وُتِي الْحِكْمَةُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ، وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا، وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ**
He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good. And none will remember except those of understanding.

Surah Al-Baqarah 269

Wisdom is knowing when to be harsh and when to be soft; knowing when to be firm and when to be gentle; knowing when to shout and when to lower your voice.

For example, when one is talking about the Hellfire and the Last Day, they should not crack a joke and laugh just because that is their personality.

Moreover, when it comes to Ayat and Ahadith, there is no room for you to be you as you cannot change them. However, you can add your touch when connecting the different pieces of evidence by the way you speak or your body language.

Side point: when preparing notes, make sure that they are targeted at your audience. For example, when speaking to a general audience, avoid being overly academic as that will cause them to switch off. Ali ibn Abi Talib رضي الله عنه said:

2 **حَدِّثُوا النَّاسَ، بِمَا يَعْرِفُونَ، اتَّحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُكَذَّبَ، اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ**
Speak to people in a way they understand. Do not be the reason for Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ to be denied.

Sahih al-Bukhari 127

Moving on to the issue of nervousness, the easiest way to get rid of it is to breathe. There is nothing wrong with going silent to take an extra breath; you can also make it look purposeful. If you have a large audience to address, you can choose to focus on one or two people; you should try to look at the middle/back of the room. Just remember not to overdo it.

As for body language, you should raise your chin. This will help you project your voice. A way to help in doing this is to fix your posture. This is not an issue when standing but it usually is when sitting. To avoid/fix this, try to sit comfortably, straighten yourself, and give yourself room to breathe. You should also try to speak with your hands i.e. move your hands as you speak.

Finally, when it comes to looking at your notes, try to keep them in a position that won't trouble you too much. You should also practice using your notes in that position so that it looks seamless when you use them in your talk.

How to Speak

Chapter Three

Silence is one of the most powerful tools you have as a public speaker. An example of how silence is used is how Al-Hajjaj was silent during one of his Khutab which made his audience focus completely on him to see what he was going to say. For this to work, you must not talk until you hold the room otherwise your speech won't have much value.

Along the same lines, you must also utilise pauses in your speech. Pausing can help you feel more relaxed, make your speech easier to understand, and make your speech more powerful.

Another element of speech that you should utilise is the level of your voice. Jaber رضي الله عنه narrated:

- 1 كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا خَطَبَ احْمَرَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ وَعَلَا صَوْتُهُ وَاشْتَدَّ غَضَبُهُ حَتَّى كَأَنَّهُ مُنْذِرُ جَيْشٍ يَقُولُ "صَبَّحَكُمْ وَمَسَاكُمْ"

When Allah ﷺ's Messenger (may peace be upon him) delivered a sermon, his eyes became red, his voice rose, and his anger increased so that he was like one giving a warning against the enemy and saying: "The enemy has made a morning attack on you and in the evening too.

Sahih Muslim 867

The ability to raise your voice and project power and emotion is really important, especially when giving a Khutbah. On the other hand, you must also know when to lower your voice.

It is narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

- 2 يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ ارْفَعْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ شَيْئًا وَقَالَ لِعُمَرَ اخْفُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ شَيْئًا
Raise your voice a little, AbuBakr, and he said to Umar: Lower your voice a little.

Sunan Abi Dawud 1329

One should also control their speaking pace and avoid speaking quickly.

'Aaisha رضي الله عنها said:

- 3 أَلَا يُعْجِبُكَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ جَاءَ فَجَلَسَ إِلَى جَانِبِ حُجْرَتِي يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُسْمِعُنِي ذَلِكَ وَكُنْتُ أُسَبِّحُ فَقَامَ قَبْلَ أَنْ أَقْضِيَ سُبْحَتِي وَلَوْ أَدْرَكْتُهُ لَرَدَدْتُ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَمْ يَكُنْ يَسْرُدُ الْحَدِيثَ مِثْلَ سَرْدِكُمْ

Are you not amazed by Abu Hurayra? He came to sit beside my apartment, and he was revising Ahadith from the Messenger ﷺ and raising his voice so that I could hear. I was praying and he stood up before I finished my prayer. If I had caught him, I would've replied to him and said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ didn't rush his words like you.

Sunan Abi Dawud 3655

Repetition is another tool that a public speaker can use to their advantage. However, one should be careful not to overdo it as that is critical.

Anas رضي الله عنه narrated:

4

إِذَا تَكَلَّمَ بِكَلِمَةٍ أَعَادَهَا ثَلَاثًا حَتَّى تُفْهَمَ عَنْهُ

Whenever the Prophet ﷺ spoke a sentence (said a thing), he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him.

Sahih Al-Bukhari 95

How to Begin

Chapter Four

Before you even start, you should make the Du'a of Musa عليه السلام (in private):

- 1 **قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي ٢٥ وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي ٢٦ وَأَخْلِلْ عُنُقَدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي ٢٧ يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي ٢٨**
[Moses] said, "My Lord, expand [i.e., relax] for me my breast [with assurance] (25) And ease for me my task (26) And untie the knot from my tongue (27) That they may understand my speech. (28)
 Surah Taha 25-28

Another thing you should say before you start is Bismillah (in private). Both of these fall under looking out for what's good for you and seeking Allah ﷻ's help as mentioned in the Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ:

- 2 **اٰخِرُضْ عَلٰى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَاسْتَعِزْ بِاللّٰهِ وَلَا تَعْجِزْ وَاِنْ اَصَابَكَ شَيْءٌ فَلَا تَقُلْ: لَوْ اَنِّيْ فَعَلْتُ كَانَ كَذَا وَكَذَا، وَلَكِنْ قُلْ: قَدَّرَ اللّٰهُ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ؛ فَاِنَّ (لَوْ) تَفْتَحُ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ**
Be keen for what will benefit you, seek help from Allah ﷻ, and do not lose heart. And if something goes wrong, don't say: If I had not done that, it would not have happened so and so, but say: Allah ﷻ did that what He had ordained to do and your “if” opens the (gate) for Satan.
 Sahih Muslim 2664

Avoid having the negative mindset that you won't be able to do it as that will only hold you back. Even if something goes wrong, it is fine as mistakes are bound to happen when public speaking; you can repeat what you were saying to rectify your mistakes.

Finally, the Prophet ﷺ used to begin his talks by praising Allah ﷻ and glorifying Him. A public speaker should do the same as anything of importance that does not begin with the praise of Allah ﷻ is cut off from good. So try to remember Allah ﷻ in your speech wherever possible, even if it's in English.

How to Introduce an Islamic Topic

Chapter Five

When introducing an Islamic topic, there has to be the praise of Allah ﷻ and the sending of salutations upon the Prophet ﷺ.

Below are two examples:

- 1 الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله
All praise is due to Allah ﷻ, and may Allah ﷻ exalt the mention and grant peace to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.
- 2 إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ . ثُمَّ تَصِلُ خُطْبَتَكَ بِثَلَاثِ آيَاتٍ مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ {يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ} إِلَى آخِرِ الْآيَةِ { وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ } إِلَى آخِرِ الْآيَةِ {اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ} إِلَى آخِرِ الْآيَةِ

Praise is to Allah ﷻ, we praise Him and we seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah ﷻ from the evil of our own souls and from our bad deeds, Whomsoever Allah ﷻ guides will never be led astray; and whomsoever is led astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah ﷻ, alone with no partner or associate, and that Muhammad ﷺ is His slave and His Messenger. Then add to your Khutbah the following three verses: 'O you who believe! Fear Allah ﷻ as He should be feared, and die not except in the state of Islam (as Muslims) with complete submission to Allah ﷻ.' And: 'O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person, and from him He created his wife, and from them both He created many men and women, and fear Allah ﷻ through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allah ﷻ is Ever an All-Watcher over you.' And: 'O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah ﷻ and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth. He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins...' until the end of the verse.

Sunan Ibn Majah 1892

Then the Prophet ﷺ would sometimes say:

- 3 أما بعدُ فإن خيرَ الحديثِ كتابُ اللهِ، وخيرَ الهدي هديُّ محمدٍ صَلَّى اللهُ عليه وسلَّم، وشرُّ الأمورِ محدثاتها وكلُّ بدعةٍ ضلالةٌ وكلُّ ضلالةٍ في النارِ
To continue, the most truthful of speech is the book of Allah ﷻ, and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad ﷺ, and the most evil of matters are the newly invented beliefs, and every newly invented belief in Islam is an innovation, and every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Hellfire.

Sahih Muslim 867

After this one should say “أما بعد” (to continue) and then go ahead with their speech.

How to End

Chapter Six

The first thing to consider is summarising the speech at the beginning and end. At the beginning to give people an idea of the talk, and at the end because many people come late, many switch off during the speech, and many don't remember what you said.

As for what to say, you can end the speech by sending salutations upon the Prophet ﷺ.

- 1 **والصلاة والسلام على نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين**
May Allah ﷻ exalt the mention and grant peace to our Messenger Muhammad, to his family, and to all his Companions.

You can also end by saying Kaffarat Al-Majlis

- 2 **سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ**
Exalted are you O Allah ﷻ, and all praise is for you. I testify that there is no god worthy of worship but you; I seek your forgiveness and return to you in repentance.
 Sunan Abi Dawud 4859

There are other ways to end as well but these two were mentioned as examples. Finally, It is important to link everything covered in this course together for the talk to be coherent. It is also important to add here that public speaking becomes easier with practice.



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